14. Excise.—It is upon the Excise Department that you have to depend for the wherewithal for meeting the cost of many services rendered by the State to the people. For, it is the Excise Department that finds a half of our revenue. Excise is a tax on certain home commodities and on licenses for certain trades. Some of these are devoted to the provision of luxuries; others are definitely or doubtfully pernicious. It is, as stated in the Administration Report, the policy of the Government to restrain and to control recourse to them and as a process towards restriction to make the cost of indulgence high. If, in the course of such control and restriction, money flows into the public coffers, who can blame the Government for utilising such accretions for the public well-being ?

15. Abkari.—As a result of action taken by the League of Nations, further checks are being put upon the availability of opium and ganja in the State and spontaneously Travancore has been reducing the facilities for obtaining drink. The revenue derived from this last source is exhibited under the term 'Abkari' in our budget. You will find that 'Abkari' yielded less than Rs. 20 lakhs out of the Rs. 95 lakhs the Excise Department contributed to the exchequer last year. Some among you may believe that the Government foster intemperance to swell the public purse. You will disabuse your minds of that idea if you refer to the reduction in the number of toddy and arrack shops by 76 at the beginning of this year ; to the reduction in the number of licenses for the sale of foreign liquor ; to the enhancement of the duty on jaggery-arrack ; to the raising of the rates of tree tax for tapping ; to the raising of the age-limit from 16 to 18 of persons engaged in the sale or transport of alcoholic beverages ; to the prohibition of the sale of arrack or toddy to minors and of arrack to adult women ; and to the reduction of the limit of possession of jaggery-arrack from eight drams to six drams.

16. Tobacco.—In the direction of tobacco, I would invite your attention to the extension of the prohibition against the use of tobacco by juveniles to the principal municipal towns. Another measure of some importance in the Excise Department was the substitution, for the reckoning of duty, of the pound *avoirdupois* for the *rathal* or the Dutch pound. The change resulted in bringing under levy a trifle over three tolas a pound which represents the difference between the two units of weight.

17. Customs.—The Commissioner of Excise is also responsible for the collection of customs revenue ; and in dealing with his department, it is necessary to direct your attention to the revision of the tariff-values of certain staple articles of export, such as copra and cocoanuts, so as to make them fit in with present market values and to stimulate trade in those commodities by enabling Travancore produce to enter the field of competition on even terms. Customs revenue reflects the trade of the country and the fact that during the past year there was an increase of over Rs. 2 lakhs in our customs receipts shows that trade was brisk.

18. Ports.—Our ports are becoming more active and are attracting more shipping. Both in the number of steamers and in tonnage there was a very substantial increase, Alleppey attracting the largest amount of additional shipping. For Trivandrum and Colachel also, the results are encouraging. A direction in which I have ordered enquiries is the cause of the large falling off in country craft which call at our ports. The explanation so far given is that competition with coasting steamers is responsible for the decline. Means have been adopted, as you will see from the Administration Report, for making Alleppey and Trivandrum ports more serviceable to shipping. The question is now being considered of further improving Alleppey and of affording greater facilities at Quilon. In regard to the latter, before taking further steps, endeavour is being made to secure guarantees of more tonnage for the port, both in imports and exports. If we may be sure of a regular thirty or forty thousand tons extra, it would be worth while building a pier or a jetty there. Arrangements are in progress for a trunk telephone connection between Alleppey and Cochin.

19. Administration of Justice.—A matter which is of vital importance to the people of the country is the promptitude with which justice is administered.

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